CHARLES MALLORY HATFIELD

onto....? 1937 Hatfield

RAINMAKER SEEKS SUNSHINE

Marries His Sweetheart of 50 Years Ago--James C. Safley

"It ain't gonna rain no more," is the song Charles lory Hatfield, of Glendale, southern California's 62- -old rainmaker of international fame is singing these .

From now on, all days are to be sunny for the man who, for the last 33 years, has claimed credit for producing rain in drought-stricken regions from Dawson, Yukon Territory to the coffee and banana plantations of Honduras. He just has been married to Mrs. Martha Priester McLain, 61, a Hollywood widow and his sweetheart of schooldays.

Fifty years ago, when what now is glamorous Hollywood was a mere wide spot in the road, Charley Hatfield and Martha Priester were schoolmates in the little, old, red schoolhouse. They became fond of each other but drifted apart. Martha Priester married and reared a family.

Hatfield, tall, slender youth, dabbled in chemistry. He perfected a concoction which, when released in the atmosphere in arid regions, he claimed would produce rain. His experiments were successful. He became famous.

Another schoolmate of those days was Reuben S. Schmidt, now a judge of the Los Angeles superior court.

The years fleeted by. Mrs. McLain's husband died. Her friendship with Rainmaker Hatfield was renewed. Love flamed again. On Oct. 7 they were married. Judge Schmidt performed the ceremony.

To insure that no rain would dampen their happiness, the couple departed for--of all places--California's sun-baked, drough-ridden, heat-tortured Death Valley for a honeymoon.

Since he first started in the rain business in 1904, Hatfield has fulfilled 30 contracts successfully. Not once in all his efforts, he says, have the skies failed to weep at his command.

Whether he is reponsible for rain that has fallen in dry regions where he has set up his paraphernalia must be left to conjecture, but he never has failed to "produce." When he first started, his fee was $1,000--no results, no pay. The highest he ever collected was $10,000.

Hatfield erects one to four wooden towers, 24 feet high, with a metal tank 12 feet square mounted on top of each. In the tanks he mixes a combination of chemicals. What the mixture contains is Hatfield's secret. Only his brother Paul, who helps him, shares that secret.

Gases produced by the mixture are freed. "The atmosphere holds vast stores of vapor, even in our driest regions," Hatfield explains "By liberating the gases and surcharging the air with potent and powerful forces, nature responds to the assistance."

Within a day, or two, or three, rain begins to fall. Sometimes it comes in drizzles, sometimes in showers, again in torrents. At times, following Hatfield's rainmaking activities, floods have occurred. Hatfield guarantees to produce in a given season twice the normal average rainfall

for an area within a radius of 100 miles. He does not, however, promise to limit the rainfall. He disclaims responsibility for flood damages.

When they ask rain, they get it. Floods? Well, that is another matter. "I can produce rain at any time, at any place, under any conditions, " he promises. "If I fail, I do not ask any remuneration.

In May, 1921, following a prolonged drought in Alberta, Hatfield set up his towers on the shores of Chappice Lake 20 miles from Medicine Hat, stirred up his rain-making stew, and train descended in such profusion that the prairie farmers asked him to turn it off.

As to relief of the present drought conditions in Saskatchewan, the rainmaker modestly refers to his record of 26 years ago. "I produced rain in Canada then; I can do it again," he says.

"Rainmaking is my business in life," Hatfield continued, as he smiled fondly at his bride, "but, from now on, there's no doubt in my mind but that every cloud will have a silver lining."

A rancher from Cavendish, Alberta, who was a great practical joker, was in Oyen just after the Big Rain of 1920. A delegation from Oyen had been down to the Hat to bargain with Hatfield for some rain. On their return trip such a heavy rain came on that they were "nearly drowned".

Oyen was all excited over the million dollar rain. Faith in Hatfield ran high. Everywhere in town there were groups of farmers discussing the wonderful rain and Hatfield. Observing this the rancher sent friend Alec, with thirty-five dollars and some instructions, across the street from one of these groups.

The rancher came up to the group and introduced himself as Hatfield. There was handshaking all around. Just about the time friend Alec was joining the group the psuedo Hatfield asked the men just what the rain meant to them in dollars and cents. Right away friend Alec, as per instructions, pulled out the thirty-five dollars and put it in his hat saying that that was what it was worth to him. Not to be outdone the rest all followed suit. It is said that the rancher and friend Alec cleaned up a tidy sum from the farmers.

Source unknown.

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